

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Federal STEM Education Programs: Educators' Perspectives

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10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

I am pleased today that we have a cadre of consumers of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) educational programs across the federal agencies before us to hear about their experiences. I believe it is the desire of all the Members of the Science and Technology Committee that we support the implementation of programs that are well-designed and effective. Often as legislators we are so distanced from final implementation of programs that we hear little about personal challenges and successes. Today's hearing will delve into what is happening with the consumers of federal STEM agency programs.

While each of our panelists brings unique perspectives to the table today, I note that there are a few common themes running through your prepared testimony. Several of you have identified the federal science and technology workforce and facilities as under-utilized resources for K-16 classrooms. I am interested to learn more about programs that successfully leverage these resources. Secondly, many of you remark that the best programs are those that excite and inform students and teachers. Finally, your testimony – coupled with the recent release of the Academic Competitiveness Council's (ACC) report on federal STEM programs – emphasizes a need to reduce the number of programs that are not evaluated or clearly do not provide a benefit to teachers and students. Alternatively, faced with a maze of resources, you need help identifying programs that have been evaluated as successful to know what may be useful to you. Our challenge in Congress is to target limited federal funds at programs which leverage relevant federal resources and also complement the local educational requirements. Then we will have achieved a win-win scenario to promote STEM literacy at all levels.

I am particularly pleased to see that today's panel includes Michael Lach. As an Einstein Fellow in my office from 1999-2000, Michael provided extremely valuable insight to me on STEM education and science policy. He has moved on to much grander things, now directing the science and math curricula for the entire Chicago Public School system. He has been an outspoken pioneer for effective teaching in math and science from the time that he started teaching high school science through the Teach for America program. Granted, I will allow that I am a little biased since Michael is a physicist by training, but I have been told by others that he is an exceptional teacher, one that other teachers look up to as the example they aspire to be. We are fortunate to have him here with us today. Welcome, Michael.